1: Ammar E, I-5 (1951) 1954
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Silwa

Foreword

In writing a foreword to Dr. H. M. Ammar's study of growing up in an Egyptian village, I am expressing in particular terms the general satisfaction which every university teacher feels when a field of research which he has been advocating for some time, is adopted, investigated and made the subject of an original study. Dr. Ammar's book was the result of an intensive period of field work in Egypt, preceded by systematic study in London where he formulated his theories, argued his premises in seminars, and examined the main approaches to his problems. He has done me the honour of referring to several of my published papers, and it is clear from these references and from the way in which he has handled his topic, that his research was directed towards the almost unexplored field of the social and psychological aspects of the training of children in a village community. The village of Silwa which he chose for his study was a community which in its social structure and economic life was, to a large extent, homogeneous. Though it was relatively isolated geographically, it was not unaffected by social change, and an important section of Dr. Ammar's book deals with the impact of a modern system of schooling on the outlook and activities of the villagers.

The publication of this study marks a second stage in the contribution of the University of London Institute of Education to this important field. In 1940, Dr. Otto Raum, also a former post-graduate student at the Institute, published his *Chaga Childhood*, the first full-scale study of indigenous tribal education undertaken at a British university. Dr. Raum's book was the first landmark in a new approach to the study of what had formerly been called 'Primitive Education'. In this book he related the process of training Chaga children in their own environment to the nature and activities of Chaga tribal institutions, and relied on the teaching and field work of social anthropologists, chiefly those of the functional school, for his theoretical guidance.

The focus of interest of scholars in this field, up to the publication of Dr. Raum's book in 1940, was in societies which were then designated as 'primitive'. Subsequent field studies, between 1940 and 1953, were almost exclusively confined to tribal societies, where the culture was enshrined in institutions, distinctive to, and dominant in, a particular tribe, and hence

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114 limited to that tribal group and tribal area. The notable exceptions to the limitation to tribal societies were the American field studies in Indian communities in North, Central, and South America, and in Negro communities in the southern states. Only one piece of research, and that hardly an intensive village study, had been undertaken in the cultural areas dominated by the Islamic tradition, and none in the cultural areas of the Far East and South-East Asia.

Dr. Ammar's book is therefore a landmark in two respects. He has carried out research in child training in a village community dominated by the Islamic cultural pattern, and has established the validity of these studies in a society which shows many contrasts with tribal societies. He has also demonstrated an original line of research. His dominant interest lay in the problems of personality and culture. In his exploratory research he ranged widely in the modern anthropological studies of culture, and also in the inter-disciplinary approach to the study of personality. In his theoretical examination of his problems, and in the organization and analysis of his field work, he has brought together the contributions of social anthropologists and of psychologists, both British and American. In his capacity as a trained educationist he has focused these contributions on the dual aspect of education of the children in Silwa village, in its traditional and modern forms. It is this correlation of the study of traditional child training, in its setting of the village culture of Upper Egypt, with the examination of the impact of modern schooling on that village culture, which distinguishes Dr. Ammar's contribution to the progress of research in this field.

There have been relatively few intensive and localized studies of the part played by modern education in social change in Western Europe. There have been fewer still in tropical areas, and in those parts of the Middle and Far East where the form and content and methods of modern schooling have been to a large extent exported from Western Europe, or at least have received their initial impetus and imprint from that source. Dr. Ammar has also accepted the challenge of the need for research in this second unexplored field, which is necessarily correlated with the problems of cultural continuity in societies where a traditional form of social and economic life still persists. There is often a time-lag between the introduction of educational reforms and their full implementation, due to the reluctance to accept reforms by those elements in the population which regard imposed cultural changes of any kind as a threat to their security. Here Dr. Ammar has indicated further lines of research which are significant in all plans for educational advance.

MARGARET READ

Institute of Education,
University of London.
February, 1954.

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HERODOTUS, the father of anthropology, might have been surprised to learn that he was destined to number daughters as well as sons among his intellectual progeny. There can be no doubt, however, that Miss Blackman can justly claim to be reckoned in the direct line of his descendants. In Egypt, her chosen field of research, Herodotus gathered some of his most valuable material. His method too was like hers, namely, to take down the traditional lore of the folk as it came fresh and straight from their lips. The ideal collector of folklore must have a genius for hob-nobbing. From lettered priest to unlettered peasant, all classes of the population must be on gossiping terms with him. Of course, he does not plague them with set questions. Though he keeps a note-book handy he does not flourish it in their faces. He makes it his business not so much to talk as to listen. If the soul of the people is to be revealed they must be overheard as, all unconscious of the presence of the stranger, they fuss and chatter about the affairs of the hour—about the prices of the market and the state of the crops, about yesterday's funeral and to-morrow's wedding, about the donkey's sore back and the sore eyes of the baby. The secret, in short, is to observe unobserved. The folklorist should be capable of melting like a disembodied spirit into the atmosphere of the local life. Or, if he is to be noticeable at all, let it at least be in some character that is strictly consonant with his surroundings. Thus Miss Blackman might possibly have preferred to dispense altogether with her widespread reputation for healing power. Yet to go about trailing clouds of contagious virtue was at all events more in keeping with prevailing notions of normal behaviour than if they had happened, say, to be clouds of exotic scent.

Moreover, not only is anthropology the product of friendly relations, but it likewise produces them. I am thinking more especially of the great kindness which Miss Blackman experienced everywhere at the hands of the leading officials of Egypt. They were evidently in full sympathy with her scientific aims. Unfortunately,

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THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

121 politics and even religion cannot always avoid conforming to
●114 lines of ethnic cleavage too closely to prove wholly effective instruments of mutual understanding. Science, on the other hand, is absolutely disinterested in spirit. Its discoveries are for the whole world to enjoy. There can be no rivalry between the nations as regards their respective shares in the creation of knowledge except in so far as it takes the form of honourable competition in the training of sound scholars. The time is doubtless coming when more Egyptians will come forward as investigators duly educated in the critical use of evidence; and they will be welcome.

121 After all, it is hard to say whether the Egyptians themselves or the rest of the world have more to gain from the study of the age-
133 long history of Egypt and of the no less enduring individuality of its people. The country is self-contained enough, thanks to the geographical barriers that shut in the Nile Valley, to maintain a civilization answering to its own needs. Even physically the
144 Egyptian type breeds true to itself. As often as racial intermixture occurs, the foreign strain would seem to become recessive to the point of extinction. On the other hand, Egypt is situated at the
131 meeting-point of three continents. It presides over the junction
174 of the Western and Eastern water-ways of the Old World. How far its influence has extended, whether by direct or by indirect propagation, at various critical periods of history is a problem, much discussed at the present moment, on which the most distant regions may be able to throw light. Any diffusion of culture, however, tends to fade out toward its circumference, and is only to be fully understood by intensive study at the centre. In the case of Egypt it is possible to grasp the complex nature of the
175 centrifugal force thence set in motion all the more thoroughly because there is literary as well as material evidence at the disposal of the archæologist. Silent monuments, too, often form the only yield of the spade. Even pictures speak at best in riddles. Literature, however, when it came into existence in Egypt or in Mesopotamia could in some measure disclose that ethnic psychology which alone is the key to genuine history.

181 Nevertheless, the psychic life of a people is but partially and
538 imperfectly reflected in its literature. Just as in the individual the unconscious part of the mind may be supremely determinative of the total character, so in a community the non-literary and

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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largely inarticulate classes may do much by way of help or hindrance to shape its destiny. The people of Egypt, having retained their self-identity unimpaired during at least five millennia, a record which puts all other nations into the shade, can be studied now so as to frame a fair estimate of what, psychologically, they have always been. Miss Blackman's work having been mainly among the folk—that portion of the society whose hidden but none the less active impulses and beliefs govern the making of history as it were from below—she is contributing just what is needed to afford an adequate explanation of Egypt's civilizing activity as a spiritual movement.

A word in conclusion as to the usefulness of the woman anthropologist. She is sympathetic by nature. She is not politically suspect. She can get at the women, who as the educators of the rising generation exercise an immense influence on the formation of mental habits. In short, anthropology is as much a woman's job as a man's. It only remains to add that a woman who wishes to be useful in this way must follow Miss Blackman's example, and go through a suitable training before she enters the field.

R. R. MARETT.

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PREFACE

THIS book represents but a small portion of the work upon which I have been engaged in Egypt during the last six years. I have spent, on an average, six months annually in the country, living almost entirely among the *fellāḥīn*. I wish to make it quite clear to my readers that the customs and beliefs, and the general manner of life, described in this book represent those of the peasants only; by the upper classes they have, of course, long been discarded. These customs and beliefs are of great importance and interest in themselves, but the fact that most of them are very ancient makes it still more urgent that they should be adequately studied and recorded. Already my researches have thrown light on points hitherto obscure to students of ancient Egypt; hence this book may, I hope, be not only an addition to anthropological knowledge, but also a contribution to Egyptology.

It has been my aim to describe the life of the modern inhabitants of the Nile Valley in the simplest way, avoiding technical language, for my purpose in writing this book has been to interest the general public and present them with a readable and, at the same time, true description of the peasants of Egypt.

I want to emphasize the fact that though the contents of this book form but a tithe of the information I have collected, yet even so I am only at the beginning of my work. Many years of research still lie ahead of me, for the sources of information are very far from exhausted. When my work is more nearly complete my intention is to produce a large and strictly scientific volume on the beliefs and practices and the social and industrial life of the modern Egyptians.

I have endeavoured to be strictly accurate in all my statements. Every custom and belief here dealt with has been most carefully inquired into before I committed it to paper. Nevertheless, those who are experienced field-workers in anthropology know how easy it is to make mistakes and to misunderstand, even after careful investigation, the true inwardness of things. I therefore invite

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criticism, and I hope that, if I have misunderstood a point, my Egyptian friends will not hesitate to inform me. I am most anxious that educated Egyptians should recognize the importance of the anthropology and folklore of their country, and my earnest hope is that some of them will be persuaded to take up this study. They surely, if they received the proper training, would be best able to undertake anthropological research among their own people. Before very long I much hope that I may see a flourishing anthropological institute established in Cairo, forming a centre for all such research work, not only in Egypt itself, but in adjacent countries—for who knows how far the influence of ancient Egypt has extended? Some writers in England even postulate an almost world-wide diffusion of Egyptian culture!

I have said that I am only at the beginning of my work. I have not as yet touched Lower Egypt, and my idea is to include in my researches not only the whole of Egypt proper, but the Egyptian Oases and Lower Nubia. I must also undertake a far more intensive study of the provinces which I have already visited, carefully recording all local differences. This of course requires many more years of hard work.

The cult of Muslim sheikhs and Coptic saints is a subject in which I have particularly interested myself. I have not dealt with it here in detail, as I hope shortly to bring out a book dealing solely with the beliefs, ceremonies, and mythology connected with these venerated persons.

I am glad to have this opportunity of expressing my sincere thanks to the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for the grants which they have made me during the last four years, and to the Royal Society and the Committee for Anthropology in Oxford for supplementary grants. I owe much also to the encouragement and kindly appreciation of my work which I have received from so many in the University and elsewhere, and to the support afforded me by the special committee appointed by the British Association to promote the furtherance of my researches. To the officials in Egypt and to the Egyptians generally I owe more than I can express. Without the assistance and facilities afforded me by the officials, and the friendliness I have encountered among all classes alike, it would have been quite impossible for me to have accomplished the work I have done. Some of the officials have personally assisted me in my investigations, and the way the

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CHAPTER II

THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN

562 114 FOREIGNERS are often heard talking about "the poor oppressed Egyptian woman." She is spoken of as overworked and ill-treated, and her husband as a brute without feeling or thought for her. I would have my readers bear in mind that in this book I am dealing only with the *felläḥīn*; I have no intention of discussing or criticizing the aspirations for emancipation which are now finding voice among many Egyptian ladies of the upper classes. What I have to say here concerns the peasants only, among whom I have sojourned for several years. No one is more anxious than I am to see the status of Egyptian women raised, for until they are made fit to hold a higher position in their world there is, I think, little chance of the country taking a more exalted place among the nations of the earth.

868 562 [872] The girls' education should be entirely practical to start with, and book-learning should come by slow degrees. They should be taught the best way of carrying out their domestic duties, which are, after all, very simple—how to cook their food in a cleanly way, [863] to realize that hands should be carefully washed before handling food or mixing the flour and kneading the dough for bread, and [515] [852] that a *clean*, not a dirty, dress should be worn when they are engaged in any culinary operation. They should also be made to realize that if they would spend but half an hour to an hour every morning sweeping their mud floors and the ground outside their [356] house-doors, and then burning the refuse, they would have both healthier and brighter homes and villages. At present they are [744] without the most elementary knowledge of hygiene, and are unmethodical in the carrying out of most, if not all, their domestic duties. It is in matters such as these that the village girls need instruction first and foremost.

562 The somewhat inferior position that the peasant women occupy in village society compared with that of the men follows as a natural consequence of their greater ignorance.

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believe, by cutting her throat. Unfaithfulness in a wife may likewise be punished by death, sometimes death by drowning. If her paramour also is caught they may be thrown into the river or a canal together.

The moral standard is very much lower in some villages than others, and I have observed that villages of pure, or comparatively pure, Egyptian stock are more moral sexually, more honest, and less prone to crimes of violence than are those of mixed negro or Arab origin.

In any case, it is not fair to judge these peasants too harshly. Much cannot be expected of them in their present condition of ignorance, and I believe that until the women can be depended on to exercise a purer and higher influence on their society there is not much prospect of the moral tone of the village communities being raised.

In later years a woman, especially if she has sons, has an honourable position in the family. A man's love and respect for his mother is a marked characteristic among Egyptians, and even after marriage the mother retains the highest place in her son's love and respect. Some years ago I was told that if a man ill-treated his mother and did not show her the greatest honour and respect the whole village would consider him a reprobate. In the married son's household his mother reigns supreme, and the wife who does not show proper respect to her mother-in-law usually has no chance of finding favour with her husband. As an old friend of mine, a man who had always had the greatest veneration and love for his mother, once said to me, " My wife is good, and I am pleased with her, but she must remain there [pointing downward]. My mother is up there [pointing upward]. Did she not carry me here for nine months [pressing his hands on his stomach] ? Did she not endure pain to give me birth, and did she not feed me from her breast ? How could I not love her ? She is always first and above all with me. My wife may change and may lose her love for me. My mother is always the same ; her love for me cannot change."

I fear I may seem to have given a very unpleasant impression in many respects of the peasants of Egypt, but I have dwelt on the darker side of the picture at some length not because there is no brighter side, nor because I am lacking in appreciation of the many excellent qualities to be found in most of my village friends. It is

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114 because of my real affection for them, and because I very greatly
121 desire to see their lives improved, especially from the moral standpoint, that I venture to speak openly on a subject in which I am much interested—*i.e.*, how to assure a more wholesome childhood and a higher mental training for the girls, so that they may be better and wiser wives and mothers.

114 I have every cause to speak of these people with affection, for
181 their courtesy to me has been unbounded, and I have often marvelled at their patience and cheerfulness, even in the midst of poverty and great privations, which they bear with a courage that enforces respect. Their kindness to each other in times of trouble is most marked, and they will as a rule, however poor they may be, share their scanty fare with one whose position may be even worse than their own. This nobler side of their character shows what a fine people they might become were the women, the chief influence in any community, to receive a better training in childhood, a more suitable education, and to have held up before them a higher ideal of life.

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Coptic Priests are often believed, both by Christians and Muslims to possess the power of healing. If anyone is bitten by a mad dog a priest is called in to see the sufferer. He takes some of the hair of the mad dog, and, after rubbing the wound with spirit, places the hair on it and sets it alight. This must be done by a priest only, otherwise the person who was bitten will get hydrophobia.

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The village 'doctor' or 'surgeon' is also called upon to treat

FIG. 128. SCRAPING THE BLOOD OFF THE FOREHEAD AFTER CUTTING IT AS A CURE FOR HEADACHE

animals when necessary. If an animal has a pain in one leg, for instance, it is branded with a red-hot nail on the part that is affected. When riding through the fields one day I saw a cow that had been branded on one of its legs, the marks forming a pattern (Fig. 130). On inquiry I was told that this had been done because the cow had had a pain in that part which was branded.

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When travelling about Egypt it is my custom to take a large basket of medicines with me, and I do my best to cure simple cases of illness. Thanks to an excellent prescription given to me by a doctor friend of mine in England I have been able to cure some really appalling cases of inflammation of the eyes (Fig. 129). The peasants react in a remarkable way to simple cures, and many a

[Text continued on page 216]

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FIG. 129. ATTENDING TO THE EYES OF ONE OF MY PATIENTS

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case of bad skin disease has been alleviated by application of boracic cream! Cascara also is largely in demand, and it is no exaggeration to say that I give away hundreds of these tabloids every year. Cases of fever likewise have recovered rapidly with judiciously administered doses of aspirin or quinine. This practice of mine has earned for me the name of the Sheikheh Shifā (the Sheikheh of Healing), and it is a title which I much appreciate and

FIG. 130. COW BRANDED AS A CURE FOR PAIN IN THE LEG

value, however undeserved it may be. I have been much touched by the gratitude shown me by many of my poor patients, and in some parts of Egypt there have been occasions when I have treated over a hundred of them a day (Fig. 131). It brings me into close touch with the people, and gives me opportunities of talking to the women about keeping their children clean and impressing on them the value of soap and water. I now make it a rule never to give medicine for any child who is brought to me in a dirty state. The mother has to go home and wash it first, and then bring it to me again. I am glad to say that they nearly always return with a very much cleaner infant.

Greater facilities for providing the peasants with adequate medical treatment are urgently needed in Egypt at the present

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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time, and it is most encouraging to hear that the Government is now setting aside certain sums of money with a view to erecting more hospitals. Such a scheme deserves every encouragement and support.

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FIG. 131. SOME OF MY PATIENTS

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cast the evil eye over it. To counteract this she will take as many small lumps of salt as there were visitors, and throw them one by one on the fire, which leaps up into flame each time. As the flames burst forth so, she believes, will the evil eye burst, and all harm caused by it be taken away from the child. This is a common practice among both Copts and Muslims all over Egypt.

Again, if a woman, whether Copt or Muslim, has a baby that is constantly crying she believes that it has had the evil eye cast over it. In order to dispel the mischief done, the child's grandmother (either paternal or maternal), keeping it well away from her body, carries it to the *zīr* (see p. 137), round which she passes it seven times. As she does this she repeats seven times, "O angel of the water, take away the evil eye from this child." Water being very valuable in Egypt, it is believed that every vessel containing it possesses a guardian angel of the water, and this angel, it is thought, will remove the ill effects of the evil eye from the child.

When admiring a child or any other of your neighbour's possessions, it is the correct thing to say, "*Mā shā' Allāh*" ("What God willeth is") or "*Ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi*" ("Bless the Prophet"), in order that your praise may not be taken for envy and that there may be no suspicion that you are casting the evil eye upon the object of your admiration.

The first year that I lived in an Egyptian village I fell ill two or three times with fever. The villagers had never come into close contact before with any Englishwoman, and so every article of my dress was noticed and commented on, as well as my eyes, the colour of my cheeks, and so on. When riding through the village many kindly and complimentary remarks were made: "See, she has the eyes of a cat"—a great compliment, to the minds of the villagers—"How beautiful is the colour of her cheeks!" etc. When I fell ill the second time my attendant, a most faithful and devoted man, was convinced that it was entirely due to some one having cast the evil eye upon me. He therefore harangued the villagers, and told them that they were, of course, quite right to admire me, and that all that they said was true, but that in future such remarks were not to be made without one at least of the protecting phrases mentioned above. The consequence was that the next time I went out riding I was followed by a whole concourse of people, men, women, and children, all ejaculating as I

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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passed, "*Mā shā' Allāh, mā shā' Allāh; ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi, ṣalla 'a 'n-Nebi,*" as fast as they could speak.

Another year, when I was again visiting this village, I contracted a bad chill, accompanied by fever. Some of the village women insisted on seeing me, and, with many head-shakings, declared that it was the evil eye again, and in any case they must make the usual test to see. Alum was burned in a fire placed in a pottery saucer, and while it was burning it was carefully watched by my village friends. Alum, when thus being heated, forms a lot of little bubbles, which the peasants call 'eyes,' and the women watching this process remarked on the number of eyes that had been cast at me, and that it was no wonder I was ill. When the alum becomes a charred mass it is supposed to assume a male or female form. In this instance it assumed both, so it was decided that the harm done to me had been committed by both a man and a woman. Sometimes the alum, after being burned, is submitted to an old woman, who is supposed to be able to tell who the actual culprit is. After this test, in my case, several presents of incense were sent to me by my poor neighbours. The Coptic priest, then living in the desert monastery near by, also sent me some, which, he said, had been blessed in the church. All this incense was, at different times, burned in the room where I lay ill, the saucer in which it was burning being passed over me seven times. As I got decidedly better a day or two later it was, of course, credited to the incense, which had, so they believed, destroyed the harm done to me by the evil eye.

FIG. 133. NECKLACE WORN BY A YOUNG CHILD TO AVERT THE EVIL EYE

Blue beads, and necklaces made of them, are worn by women and children (Fig. 133) as protective charms against this supposed evil; and animals are decorated with blue cotton tassels and strings of beads, with the same end in view. Red is also an effective charm, and I have often noticed, as a string of camels has passed by me in the cultivation or in the desert, that the leading animal is wearing red tassels or blue beads, or both, round its neck. The

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XIV

'AFĀRĪT

AMONG the varous supernatural beings who figure conspicuously in tle life of Egyptian peasants are the *'afārīt* (singular *'afrīt*. This word is usually translated in dictionaries 'devils' or 'demons,' as distinct from the *ginn*, who are, properly speaking, the good spirits.[1] The peasants, however, so I have found, employ tle words *ginn* and *'afārīt* indiscriminately, the latter word being more commonly used. The *'afārīt* are believed to be made of fire, and to have been created many thousands of years before Adam. They may be the chosen assistants of people of evil intent who wish to harm others; they may also, of their own accord, enter into anyone who is doing something wrong, thereby laying himself open to such possession. They are sometimes quite harmless, and will do no injury to a human being unless they are interfered with.

The *'afārīt* are supposed to live under the earth, where they form an organized society, with a king at their head. They haunt, so it is believed, springs and wells in uninhabited regions, such as the desert, and the narrow paths which wind about through the cultivation. There are other places, even on high roads, which are known by those versed in such matters to 'belong,' as they say, to *'afārīt*.

On a recent visit to Egypt a charming Rest-house with a good garden was generously placed at my disposal by the Egyptian Government (Fig. 134). It was my custom, when the weather was hot, to sit out in the garden every evening, where some of my village friends would join me, drink coffee, and have a chat. Among them was a small dealer in antiquities, who had a considerable knowledge of the folklore of the people. He told me one evening in the course of conversation that the road which ran past my house had, some years back, been much haunted by *'afārīt*, and that a portion of the

[1] See E. W. Lane, *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* (London, 1871), vol. i, pp. 283 ff., and also his translation of *The Arabian Nights* (London, 1883), vol. i, pp. 26 f. (notes to Introduction).

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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CHAPTER XVII

THE VILLAGE STORY-TELLER AND HIS TALES

538 [217] THE modern Egyptian peasants are as fond of stories as were their ancestors in the days of Herodotus. Since few of the older people can read or write they have largely to depend for such entertainment on the public recitations of story-tellers. Most villages possess at least one story-teller, who, as a rule, has some trade with which he is engaged during the day. In the evening the male villagers are in the habit of congregating in one another's houses, or in some shop or *café*. To such a gathering the story-teller is a welcome addition, and he tells his [465] tales in return for very small sums of money presented to him by members of his audience. The story-teller may have taken [424] years to collect his tales, or he may have inherited them from his forbears. The peasant is an excellent *raconteur*, possessed of great imagination, very dramatic, and entirely free from self-consciousness.

538 124 ●114 Among my village friends are two or three story-tellers, and from them I have collected and written down a large number of tales. Some were related to me in my brother's desert camp the first year I was in Egypt. I would appoint a day for the story-teller to visit me, and, as the hour approached, I would see him and the schoolmaster who came with him to assist me in my translations of the stories riding across the lower desert on donkeys. On their arrival coffee was brought, and, when they had partaken [516] of this refreshment, the story-teller seated himself cross-legged on the ground, drew his robe around him, and, after some minutes' reflection, began one of his tales.

538 115 One of my story-teller friends, a cheery person, was a dyer by trade, as, indeed, was made evident by the state of his hands, which were stained almost as dark a blue as his cotton clothes. When he was a young boy he was apprenticed to a firm of dyers, [463] and he would listen to stories told to his fellow-workmen as they plied their task. Having a retentive memory, he stored up all

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Ancient Egypt MR5

CHAPTER XVIII

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

I WISH to make it quite clear that in this chapter I am by no means supplying a full list of the ancient analogies with which I am acquainted. My intention is merely to give the reader some idea of the importance of this particular branch of my research. In my strictly scientific account of the *felläḥīn*, to which I have referred in the Preface, the question of survivals will be dealt with very fully. As I am shortly publishing a book which deals exclusively with Coptic saints and Muslim sheikhs, to be followed later by a book on modern Egyptian medicine-men and their remedies, I am here omitting all references to the numerous and important survivals connected with the cults of those saints and sheikhs, and I am only just touching on the resemblances of the modern to the ancient magico-medical prescriptions.

An ancient Egyptian town and village must have presented much the same appearance as an Upper Egyptian town and village of to-day.[1] Then as now (pp. 27 f.) the better sort of house had one or more upper stories,[2] was doubtless often whitewashed or colour-washed,[3] and had a staircase probably (as is now frequently the case) of brick, leading from floor to floor and on to the roof, where were erected exactly the same mud granaries (p. 28) as are to be seen there nowadays (see Fig. 154).

On the roof of an ancient as of a modern house were often placed two *malāḳif* (singular *malḳaf*),[4] the ventilators by means of which the north and south wind are conveyed into the house during the hot weather.

[1] See A. M. Blackman, *Luxor and its Temples* (London, 1923), p. 4; T. E. Peet and C. L. Woolley, *The City of Akhenaten*, Part I (London, 1923), p. 54 and note 1.

[2] A. Wiedemann, *Das alte Ägypten* (Heidelberg, 1920), p. 168; A. Erman and H. Ranke, *Aegypten und aegyptisches Leben im Altertum* (Tübingen, 1923), pp. 190 ff.; W. Wreszinski, *Atlas zur altaegyptischen Kulturgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. 60a.

[3] Nina de Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Two Officials of Tuthmosis the Fourth* (London, 1923), Pl. XXXIV, p. 30.

[4] A. Erman and H. Ranke, *op. cit.*, pp. 203 f.; A. Wiedemann, *op. cit.*, p. 168; N. de Garis Davies, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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Ancient Egypt MR5

ANCIENT EGYPTIAN ANALOGIES

On p. 236 I speak of the slaying of a victim on the threshold of a new house and at the installation of a new engine or water-wheel. With this may be compared the slaying of victims—an ox and a goose—at the ceremony of laying the foundation of an ancient Egyptian temple.[1]

The unwillingness to save a drowning person mentioned on pp. 238 f. may be the last remains of an ancient belief that to be drowned was to "do the pleasure of Rē'," and that by being drowned a person was divinized, a belief to which Herodotus refers somewhat vaguely.[2] Professor Griffith wrote a very illuminating article on this subject some years ago in the *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache*,[3] and my brother, Dr A. M. Blackman, has also dealt with it at some length in his *Temple of Dendûr*.[4] It is, perhaps, to be remembered in this connexion that, according to more than one account, Osiris himself met his death by drowning.[5] Possibly the water-spirit, who apparently claimed (in the end successfully?) the foredoomed Prince,[6] is to be compared with the *'afrīt* that the modern *fellāḥīn* suppose to be claiming one who is drowning.

It is interesting to note that virtue was evidently attached to onions in ancient as it is in modern times (p. 261), for persons who took part in the procession round the walls of Memphis at the annual festival of Sokar, the funerary god of that city, had onions hung round their necks.[7] People also tied onions round their necks on the night preceding this festival.[8]

The love of listening to stories was certainly no less strong in the ancient Egyptians than it is in their descendants, as is shown by the number of folk-tales preserved to us from all periods. The existence of these stories points also to there having been professional story-tellers in antiquity as at the present day (pp. 268 ff.).[9]

[1] W. von Bissing and H. Kees, *Das Re-Heiligtum des Königs Ne-woser-re*, vol. ii (Leipzig, 1923), Pl. I, Fig. 2.
[2] ii, 90.
[3] Vol. xlvi, pp. 132 ff.
[4] Cairo, 1911, pp. 82 f.
[5] A. Erman, "Ein Denkmal memphitischer Theologie," in *Sitzungsberichte der königl. preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, vol. xliii, 1911, pp. 926 ff.; J. H. Breasted, *Development of Religion and Thought in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 25, 41.
[6] T. E. Peet, *Journal of Egyptian Archæology*, vol. xi, pp. 228 f.
[7] S. Sharpe, *Egyptian Inscriptions from the British Museum and Other Sources* (London, 1837–55), Part II, p. 78.
[8] H. Brugsch, *Hieroglyphisch-Demotisches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1867–80), p. 295; *Thesaurus Inscriptionum Aegyptiacarum* (Leipzig, 1883–91), p. 1144; J. Dumichen, *Altaegyptische Kalenderinschriften* (Leipzig, 1866), Pl. XXVI.
[9] See A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, p. xxix; W. Spiegelberg, *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, pp. 30 f.

2: Blackman E-5 (1920-1926) 1927
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114

THE FELLĀḤĪN OF UPPER EGYPT

It should be observed that the story of *The Shah of Persia and his Daughter* (pp. 272 ff.) bears a certain resemblance to the tale told to Herodotus [1] about Mykerinos, his daughter, and the golden image of a cow. If there is any connexion between the two stories, that told to Herodotus may after all be a genuine native folk-tale and not, as Professor Spiegelberg has suggested,[2] a mere dragoman's explanation of a monument—unless, of course, the modern tale is simply a modification of the Herodotean, and reached the masses by way of the Hellenized Egyptians of Græco-Roman times.

[1] ii, 130 f.
[2] *The Credibility of Herodotus' Account of Egypt*, p. 15.

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

FOREWORD

The "Fellaheen" of Egypt are the oldest peasantry in the world. History teaches us this, and also that the Valley of the Nile shows the oldest records of civilised and cultural life. 101

Throughout thousands of years our peasantry has kept its customs, habits, character, and type in a remarkably steady manner. 183

It is still essentially what it was in the far-distant Pharaonic days : one of the two main pillars of Egypt's wealth and well-being. The other, as Herodotus remarked long ago, is the river Nile.

A great deal has been said about the Fellah, particularly during the last few decades, and there is a vast amount of literature about Egypt and its people. Seldom, however, has a writer devoted his main interest to the study of the Egyptian peasant as a human type, looking at him, his character, his culture and traditions, with sympathy, objectivity, and an unbiased view. 114

The present book fills this gap in the literature about our country. We owe its author our sincerest thanks. 000

The more one really studies the Fellaheen of Egypt, the more one will discard a lot of mistaken ideas about their character. Now that the country has come to a turning-point of its history, it is essential that its people as a whole should be fully aware of the tremendous task ahead of them. A complete and intimate collaboration among all classes, a particularly sympathetic understanding — and not just a platonic one — of their peasantry by the upper class and landowners, is the basis and most important element of tais patriotic cooperation. The "Fellah", whether as a small — and how small! — landowner or as an agri-

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

In 1938, after having been offered as a thesis for the Doctorate of Letters in the University of Lyons, this book was puplished by Payot, Paris, under the title of MŒURS ET COUTUMES DES FELLAHS. 114

This work, with an admirable foreword by Monsieur André Allix, based on a real affection for the Egyptian fellah, was the result of many years study and observation of these people. In writing it, our intention was not merely to enlighten and inform, but also to indicate the beginnings of a plan of action.

Today, having under our care a hundred elementary schools in Upper Egypt, and visiting each month many far-distant villages, we aim at putting into practice the fundamental idea set out in this book. In the present education of our fellahs, we strive to draw closer together what we call "Outside Egypt" — ourselves — and "Inside Egypt" — the fellah.

The demand for the book very soon outran the supply, and there was an increasing demand for a new edition. Consequently, in 1942, a revised edition, with a preface by H.E. Fuad Abaza Pasha, was published in Cairo by "Horus" under the title of Fellahs. In the following year there appeared an Arabic translation from the competent pen of Mohammad Ghallab, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Al Azhar. This edition was enriched with many notes by this eminent Professor.

Now, to meet the desire often expressed by English-speaking readers, we publish the present translation, which, although contemplated for some time, has only recently been completed. The translator, Mr Hilary Wayment, is

114 known to many readers here for his book Egypt Now, published during the war. It shows him to be thoroughly conversant with the life and problems of the fellah.

This English edition is a translation of the latest French version, with additional notes. May it enlighten its readers and bring them to an affectionate and helpful understanding of the fellaheen, a people who live under the same skies and on the same soil as ourselves.

[page 8]

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

At the end of last century there appeared in France a book entitled *Le Fellah*. This book describes the life of an Egyptian aristocrat educated in France, who precisely because he had lost touch with the fellaheen and was in almost every way their antithesis, took a perverse pride in calling himself a fellah. It is typical of the lack of interest in the fellaheen which most writers about Egypt have shown that this book should have been cited in a whole chain of bibliographies as if it were a fundamental study of the fellaheen and life in the Egyptian countryside. One can only suppose that the writers had never seen a copy of the book, let alone read it.

The fact is that the serious study of rural society in Egypt has only just begun. It is over a century since Lane published his admirable book on *The Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, but this deals largely with the life of the upper classes in Cairo. After the first World War an Englishwoman, Miss W.M. Blackman, went to live for several years in the Egyptian countryside before writing *The Fellâhin of Upper Egypt* (Harrap, 1927). But Miss Blackman approached the fellaheen more as an anthropologist than as a sociologist, and was much more impressed by the superstitious practices which bind them to the past than by the actual pattern of their social existence.

Father Ayrout's book first appeared in 1938 under the title *Mœurs et Coutumes des Fellahs* in the *Collection d'études, de documents et de témoignages pour servir à l'histoire de notre temps*, published by Payot, Paris. It was accepted at once, not only in France but also in Egypt, as a standard work on the fellaheen, and in 1942, in response to widespread demand, it was republished by "Horus" of Cairo in a revised edition entitled *Fellahs*.

Father Ayrout was the first to attempt a full-length study of the life of the fellaheen in all its main aspects. Born an Egyptian of Syrian origin, and speaking both French

[page 11]

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114 and Arabic, he has taught for many years in Cairo and paid regular visits to a number of elementary schools in the villages of Upper Egypt. He is thus peculiarly fitted to interpret Egypt to the West, and to describe from within the dusty everyday life of the fellaheen, which ninety-nine Europeans out of a hundred must look upon with distant, alien eyes from the windows of a car or railway-carriage.

114 121 As a social document this book is agreed to have no rival, but its theoretical assumptions and conclusions have proved less generally acceptable. In particular Father Ayrout stresses the changelessness of fellah life, though it would be easy to show that in the century and a half which have passed since Napoleon visited Egypt, there has been a process of economic and technical change in the Egyptian countryside which cannot have left the fellah himself unmoved, and is likely in any case to have far-reaching social effects in the decades to come. I have transgressed the limits of a translator's function in revising a passage at the end of the second chapter in which Father Ayrout argues that over-population cannot prove to be a serious problem in Egypt for at least a generation. If the present social and economic set-up remains unchanged, I am convinced that it will. However, since this book was first written the discovery of high-grade iron ore in the desert near Aswan has changed the whole basis of the argument. It will not be long, one hopes, before the great weight of water sustained by the Aswan Dam can be turned into power serving not only to smelt this iron, but also to feed new factories in the Delta, and in due course provide Egypt with an industrial system as productive as her agriculture. This new wealth will make possible not only a higher standard of life for the fellaheen, but also the provision of those educational facilities without which, as Father Ayrout insists, there can be no real progress in the countryside. The sympathy and goodwill towards the fellaheen which a section of the educated classes in Egypt is already beginning to show will then have wider scope and greater effect. Such changes need not destroy, though they may modify, the organic relationship between the fellah and the soil which Father Ayrout values so much.

It often happens that a whole historical period is summed up in a book written at the moment when that period is

passing away. This is true of Lane's *Modern Egyptians* for town-life in the Egyptian middle ages, and we may hope that it will in some sense prove to be true, for the long-unchanging life of the Egyptian countryside, of Father Ayrout's *The Fellaheen*.

* * *

Besides revising the passage mentioned above, I have made some minor changes in the text or appendices, and replaced some of the statistics given in the 1938 edition by more recent figures. Once or twice I have been able to give both pre-war and war-time prices, but the changes in supply and demand during the war years have in any case divested such figures of most of their meaning.

The author's notes have been translated and set at the end of the book, together with a number of additional notes which seemed necessary to clarify certain points.

In transliterating from Arabic to Roman characters, I have tried to be as systematic as possible, but not to the point of discarding spellings already well established in English (e.g. fellaheen for *felláhín*), or varying the normal forms of names and titles. However, since Lawrence published his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, inconsistency in transliteration is perhaps not the heinous sin it was.

HILARY WAYMENT
London 1945

3: Ayrout M-5 (ca. 1935) 1945
MR13 Fellahin MR13

INTRODUCTION

ON UNDERSTANDING THE FELLAH

A country's peasantry is like the small particles in a sentence, or the strips of leading in a stained-glass window. It binds the nation together, gives it stability and character. It provides that humble but indispensable support on which both economic and social systems rely. By producing more than it consumes, the peasantry maintains society in health, and ensures a sound regularity to the state finances. 182

But the peasantry as a class is composed of separate individuals, of men. Enslaved as they may be to soil and seasons, long-suffering and slow, hide-bound and unprogressive as they appear to us, it is these people above all others who deserve the name of men. 565 182

Too long have we confused the producer with his product and the worker with the fruits of his labour. We have taken our fill of the harvest without a thought for the man who made it grow. We have failed to notice the distress which he himself could not put into words, and perhaps only half felt. And so today we are astonished at the reawakening of the peasantry, and realise with a shock of surprise what a dead weight of ignorance has been allowed to accumulate, both in official circles and in society at large, about the man of the soil. 114

By developing the themes of pastoralism and of natural beauty, and so confounding the peasant with his background, poets and artists of all ages, from Virgil to the present day, have conspired to draw a veil of illusion over the realities of country life. They have given us wonderful pictures, to be sure, but in so doing they have accustomed us to see in country life nothing but its picturesque and sentimental side, to find in an image the whole reality. The "sower's

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114 splendid gesture" has hidden from us the sower, the man himself.

This deformation is especially prevalent in the case of Egypt. In following year by year the books published on this subject in Paris alone, I have been particularly struck by it. French writers of the present day, continuing an established tradition, find Egypt a mine of interest. Between 1926 and 1937, for example, French publications on Egypt amounted to about forty novels and new travel books, not to mention a vast number of articles in newspapers and periodicals, appearing in France itself, as well as all the essays published in Egypt and elsewhere.

Now this vast mass of print, interesting as it is from many points of view, represents little more than an elegantly painted backcloth, a landscape with human figures superimposed. The fellah is never completely forgotten. He earns a few lines here, a page or two there. But he is always regarded superficially, from the outside. In any case he is not a very prominent character, and barely stands out from his background, the soil.

The result is that from such writings we shall learn a great deal about the prostitutes' quarters and the palaces of Cairo and Alexandria, something about the Pyramids, the museums and temples, the mosques and bazaars, rather less about economic and social affairs, and next to nothing about the man who is the very linch-pin of Egyptian society — the fellah.

Scientific writers about Egypt have been no less neglectfull of the fellah than men of letters. The artist looks only at the landscape, the scientist at the land, while to both the peasant remains secondary. This criticism applies to the agriculturalists, the economists, and even the geographers, who have contributed so richly to our land knowledge of Egypt.

The works on agriculture by Audebeau and Mosséri, on irrigation by Willcocks and Barois, on the Nile by Prince Omar Toussoun, on landed property by Artin Pasha, Arminjon and Minost, on the geography of Egypt by Cerviller and Hug are indeed authoritative. They do not fail to mention the fellah, but only as a detail subordinate to their main preoccupations. He is considered only in relation to rext page

nuring, harvesting or irrigation, land-ownership, taxation or the yield per acre. 114

There seemed room, therefore, for a study of the fellah himself which would show him first and foremost as a human being, and consider all these other factors not as he influences them, but as they affect him. This change of perspective should make for a better understanding of Egypt as a whole. 114 121

But the land itself is nothing. Geography may have a place here, but it will be human geography: *homo additus naturae*. And man comes first. Such is human geography as Vidal de la Blache understood it; a science including explanation as well as description, and bordering on psychology and sociology. So without ever separating the tiller of the soil from the earth which sustains and feeds him — for that would be a mutilation — we shall make him the focus of our study.

Our aim then is to portray the fellah's background and the fellah in person; to photograph the very life of these men who humanise the soil of Egypt and in their turn become almost a part of it; and to attempt a description of the contacts which explain their character and personality. 121

To save time, a familiarity with the main facts of the history of Egypt and the outlines of its geography will be taken for granted. A number of excellent works on these subjects have recently been published.

Our enquiry is limited to the fellah in the strict sense of the term, that is to say the farm labourer and small farmer, and does not touch the small craftsmen or the boatmen on the Nile. These are also fellaheen in origin, but their specialisation has given them a different way of life, which deserves a separate study.

We shall speak of the past only when it is necessary, for we are concerned with the fellah as he is today. The present, as we shall soon see, includes the past.

The bibliography, which does not claim to be exhaustive, mentions only those works to which the author has referred for specific points. Egyptian books and periodicals have been preferred where possible, since even if they are not always sufficiently concise or scientific they see Egypt from within, and the information they give, while leaving room for critical discrimination, is at least first-hand.

181 Other landowners or *nazers* take a better view. They
183 say: "Under their noisy exterior, our fellaheen are quiet, gentle people. They are satisfied with their lot, but rarely grateful. They have no interests apart from the soil." "The fellah is always happy and grateful. He is a hard and trusty worker."

● 114 Some of these opinions, which are taken at random from
181 both Upper and Lower Egypt, seem flatly contradictory. They
183 are not enough to make up a portrait, in spite of the good intentions of those who gave them; they all arise from a misunderstanding of the fellah and are in both senses of the word *partial* truths. The living reality is more complex. It would be an error of simplification to say 'Man is born good and it is society that makes him bad', or to look at only one side, the good or the evil, according to one's sympathy or lack of sympathy with the subject, or to one's own characteristic personal philosophy and outlook. To create a true picture, all these aspects must be taken into account. As in the old stereoscope, the image cannot appear in depth until both views are seen together, when there is a real combination of elements.

181 One important point must have become clear from what
183 has already been said: that the fellah's intelligence is rather collective than personal, and more static than dynamic. His wisdom and experience have crystallised into pithy sayings and proverbs, which are ready coin for all the different circumstances of his life and absolve him from individual thinking.

The fellah preserves and repeats, but does not originate anything. Any improvements or inventions introduced into agriculture or housing have been imposed on him from outside. Through constant acceptance and submission his intelligence has become atrophied and passive. It is always kept in leading-strings and never stimulated to innovation. That would mean running risks and disturbing a torpor which protects him from unnecessary suffering. What a man knows is better than what he does not know.

This lack of personality and initiative furnishes in its turn an explanation for the want of sensibility or of any living art among the fellaheen. They are uncultivated in this direction less because they are illiterate than because they neither think nor strive. In their fellah costume, in

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

SOME months before his death, in May, 1928, my master and friend the Rev. T. H. Weir, D.D., Lecturer in Arabic at the University of Glasgow, suggested to me that I might translate the following little Arabic treatise on some superstitious practices in modern Egypt. He very graciously allowed me to have access to certain of his own rough translation notes, but unfortunately I was unable to finish my rendering in time to profit by his valuable criticism and advice. I can here but inadequately express my deep sense of gratitude for his inspiring teaching, his great erudition, and, more than all, his memorable friendship.

The treatise of which this is an English rendering, appeared in Arabic in two small volumes of 158 pages in all, printed at Cairo in 1892–4 (A.H. 1310–12). The author was an Egyptian doctor, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Efendī Ismā'īl, and his book is entitled *Ṭibb al-Rukka*, i.e., The Medicine of the Old Women. For an etymological note on the meaning and origin of the word *rukka* reference may be made to page 18 of the text. A third volume was promised but, so far as can be discovered, was never issued.[1] I understand that the late Professor E. G. Browne, of Cambridge, contemplated translating the present volumes. Certainly he refers to the work in his Fitzpatrick Lectures on *Arabian Medicine*, 1921, page 65. The Arabic text is also referred to by Professor D. B. Macdonald in his article on magic (*siḥr*) in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, in which he states that it "contains much curious information on popular superstitions, especially medical; the author is a graduate of the Ḳaṣr al-'Ainī medical school and writes with the indignation of the qualified medical practitioner."[2]

In spite of the author's obvious lack of sympathy with the popular medical "prescriptions," he had ample opportunity of gaining first hand knowledge of the customs and practices of

[1] The author did publish in the following year, with the approval of the Egyptian Ministry of Education, a work called *Al-Taḥaffuẓāt al-Ṣiḥḥiyya*, but it is merely a straightforward, elementary treatise on hygiene.

[2] Prof. Macdonald vocalises the title in his transliteration as *Ṭibb al-Rikka* (see below, p. 18).

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

113 his fellow countrymen. No book since the days of Lane's
114 epoch-making work on the *Manners of the Modern Egyptians* (first published in 1836) has appeared to add, to any appreciable extent, to our knowledge of the folklore and magic of the dwellers of the Nile Valley. One recent book by Miss Blackman, *The Fellāḥīn of Upper Egypt* (London, 1928) does attempt to survey the ground, but it is only a tentative, albeit a praiseworthy, effort. Her photographic illustrations are especially interesting. But a great deal still remains to be done, and it is to be hoped that Miss Blackman and others working in the same field of research, may receive the assistance from the public that they merit. There are some secret rites, such as those [123] of the *Zār* (see pages 64-7), which can be properly investigated only by a woman.

113 Similar superstitious practices observed in neighbouring Moslem lands, it may be noted in passing, may be usefully [191] derived from Dr. T. Canaan's *Aberglaube und Volksmedizin im Lande der Bibel* (Hamburg, 1914) and from E. Doutté's *Magie et Religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Algiers, 1909), as well as from Westermarck's *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (London, 1926). Mention must also be made of Herklots' *Islam in India* (new ed. by W. Crooke, Oxford, 1921), which is a mine of folk customs. As for the instruments employed by North African village surgeons, an illuminating study of these will be found in Hilton Simpson's *Arab Surgery and Medicine* (London, 1922). Folk-medicine among the Moroccan womenfolk is also recorded by A. R. de Lens in his *Pratiques des harems marocains* (Paris, 1925). M. Rouyer's *Notice sur les médicamens usuels des Égyptiens* in the *Description de l'Égypte* (2nd ed.), xi, (1822), pp. 429–460, does not deal with the superstitious medical practices of the people; while Dr. Chafey Bey's lecture to the Institut Égyptien, entitled *De la médecine des empiriques en Égypte* (*Bulletin* No. 4, pp. 25, 44–46, 505–512) is but a cursory introduction to the subject. Much of the folk-medicine of Moslems can be extracted from the numerous Arabic books on magic, and particularly from such a treatise as the traditional medicine of the prophet Muḥammad, the so-called *Al-Ṭibb al-Nabawī*, of which a French translation, *La médecine du Prophète*, was published by Perron at Algiers in

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

1860. There is also *Al-Damīrī's Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān* (trans. by Jayakar, and published by Luzac & Co., London, 1906–8), an entertaining zoological lexicon which has embedded in it many curious instances of Moslem folk-medicine. 113

To confine our attention to Egypt, however, without doubt a great deal could be done by a cultured Egyptian student of folk-customs to collect these age-old, but fast dying, practices. A stranger can seldom hope to obtain, unless after many years' residence among, and constant intercourse with, the natives, that insight into their mentality which is necessary for such a study. Hence the work, here presented in an English garb, should be of no little value to students of folklore, and indeed to all interested in human thought and waywardness, since education, in general, and medical science, in particular, have both made rapid progress of recent years in Egypt, and the Egyptian Government's proposal to establish hospitals and dispensaries throughout the country will do much to eradicate the "cures" of the Old Wives and the village charlatans. So the day is coming, we hope, when the dangerous "remedies" of the modern Nile Dwellers will be no longer practised, but will be relegated to the archives of human error. As such the instances recorded in the present book should have increasing historical value. 114 121

The Arabic original is now out of print—in fact the British Museum possesses only Part I—but by this rendering into English of the relevant parts it is hoped that the material will be made more accessible than it otherwise would be. The translation has not been without difficulties. Besides being unvocalized throughout, as well as faulty in style, the Arabic text is none too well printed, and there are several textual errors. Still another difficulty that presents itself to a non-medical reader, is the exact rendering into English of the many medical terms used. Unfortunately the great Dictionary of Medical Terms compiled by Dr. Sharaf,[1] which has proved very helpful, is only English-Arabic and not *vice versa*. This has necessitated a great deal of search and rectification. It is to be hoped that the medical equivalents are not too glaringly [113]

[1] *An English-Arabic Dictionary of Medicine, Biology and Allied Sciences*, by Dr. Mohammed Sharaf, Cairo, Government Press, 1926 (1st edition).

inaccurate. Even so, they do not detract from the real value or purpose of the book, which is to present to English readers a conspectus of the magic and diablerie still common amongst the illiterate villagers of Egypt. Soon they will be lost, buried with the past, and unable to be exhumed like the relics of the dead Pharaohs.

The notes added by the translator, as well as the pagination of the original text, are given within square brackets. In the matter of the transliteration the system of the Royal Asiatic Society is generally employed, except that ḳ = ق, and ʾ is not transliterated except when followed by a vowel. Standardized words such as *Koran* and *Allah* I have left in that state. Colloquial forms, which abound throughout the work, are given usually as near to the current pronunciation as is needful. I have ordinarily transliterated ع by ḡ, but I have considered it unnecessary, however, to indicate the Cairene pronunciation of the ق (ḳ) as a glottal stop. Besides hitherto unrecorded charms or magic spells, the Arabic text also contains numerous words and phrases which are not usually, or readily, found in the standard dictionaries. From a lexicographical point of view it has been considered worth while to indicate these.

The author, as Dr. Macdonald noted, "writes with the indignation of the qualified medical practitioner." The burden of his tale may well be summed up in the following lines:

> "If you have cancer or nephritis,
> Diabetes or bronchitis,
> Heart disease, tuberculosis,
> Or liver hardening with cirrhosis,
> The doctor will, for sure, detect them,
> And early treatment may correct them."

Hence he is very particular in all cases to add the canonical medical treatment as an antidote to the popular superstitious practices which he so scathingly records. He is also at pains to mention those drugs and herbs which are easily procurable by the Egyptian natives. As these sections are of no value as folklore it has been considered advisable to omit them in the interests of brevity, especially in these days of expensive

4: Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

publication. For the same reason a number of sections in which the author rambles into the realm of politics, and the particular condemnation of the foreign occupation of the Nile Valley, have been passed over. The value of the book lies, not in these, perhaps pardonable, divagations, but in the faithfully recorded cases of popular folk-medicine and "curative" malpractices which existed, and still do exist, among the peasantry of modern Egypt.

Before the author begins his introduction on page 4 of the Arabic text, his brother 'Āmir Ismā'īl prefaces the work with two pages of explanation which may be summarized as follows. It is laudable for a man, he philosophizes, to make himself acquainted with the customs and habits of his own nation so that he may wisely choose whatever in them is beneficial. All races possess superstitious practices which they have inherited from the past, and which continue to persist because they have not been sufficiently combated. This was the reason why the author, 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ismā'īl, was impelled to compile the present work in the days when he was a student in Cairo. His object firstly, was to collect instances of superstitious medical practices amongst the common people, and secondly, to denounce the village quacks and the "old wives" who traded in such things. After the work had been published in the periodical called *al-Ādāb*,[1] it was suggested that when it appeared as an independent treatise it should mention the proper medical remedies, and those herbs most easily procurable by the natives themselves. This was done but, as has already been noted above, these passages are omitted in the present translation since they are unnecessary. It has also been considered advisable to modify somewhat the rather grandiose language of the author and express the sense in a more familiar English idiom. At the same time it has been felt that it would be a pity to remove altogether the flavour of the original Arabic, and, in consequence, where the phraseology is sufficiently picturesque to justify it, the rendering is as literal as is compatible with clarity.

[1] A Cairo publication. See M. Hartmann: *The Arabic Press of Egypt*, Luzac & Co., London, 1899, page 63.

4: Walker E-4 (nó date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13 Libyan Bedouin MT9 Egypt MR1

FOLK MEDICINE IN MODERN EGYPT

Study and research have shown that the cases in which the "treatment" of the *Fargān* proved successful were caused by dogs that were not rabid. It happened one day that a dog bit a man who was passing by. This man went to the encampment of the *Fargān* in search of healing. They "treated" him with cautery like the others. Not many days elapsed until there appeared in him symptoms of real hydrophobia, and night and day he was heard barking shrilly, behaving like a dog in all his actions, while his teeth were gnashing in terror. In this state he continued for a space, then he died.

Whatever may be the truth or falsity of the claim made by the *Fargān*, they have only to bring their proofs and, when their assertion is substantiated, we shall be satisfied with the glory that our common people are better than the élite of Western savants. But when we consider the matter we find that such high skill in the healing art is not achieved as a favour, but by habitual toil and industry. And the physician Pasteur, whose fame has filled the two hemispheres, did not gain his immense wealth and widespread reputation, except by devoting his life to the discovery of what he achieved in the treatment of this disease (namely, hydrophobia) after its cure was (thought) impossible. The French government built for him at their own expense a special hospital to which patients go from all quarters of the inhabited world. As for Egypt we do not forget that the Khedivial Government has sent, for the past six years, five of those afflicted with hydrophobia [p. 72] to Paris to be benefited by healing at the hand of that famous physician. So if the *Fargān* are to be trusted in what they assert, why then are they niggardly in publishing the truth, and averse to the praiseworthy place in History that would be theirs on their revealing it?

Long ago, Galen said that those bitten by dogs benefited by being given daily a drachm of burned powder of river crabs, and the illness would cease after forty days.

The doctors of India use for those afflicted with hydrophobia a draught of the Indian *Ḥuḍaḍ* or *Ḥaḍaḍ*, a drachm of it upon an empty stomach for forty days, then the hydrophobia will cease. But it is not of the slightest advantage except it be accompanied by, what the *Fargān* do in our country, "ironing"

4:Walker E-4 (no date) 1934 MR13 Fellahin MR13
(ca. 1890)

is sure of success, but this success does not materialize unless at the moment when the person is on the brink of the grave, and in the stages of poisoning for which they are no effectual remedies.

XLVI

THE "BEAD" OF THE COW (KHARZAT-AL-BAḲARA)

Some women assert, and butchers agree with them, that there is in the neck or bellies of some cattle a piece of suet which has a wonderful property of producing fat in emaciated women, and so they go to extremes to obtain it. The butchers vie with one another in enhancing its price until on occasion it has reached ten guineas.

We cannot imagine what idea drove the ladies to run after this goal, for beauty does not call for size and fatness. It is enough for a woman that she be healthy and of good deportment. It is all one to her husband whether she be bursting with fat or slender-waisted. The truth is, health is not gained by fatness, but fat is generally one of the accompaniments of health.

But if we grant that health follows fat, who will prove that the "bead" of the cow, which has acquired this wonderful fame, has the least effect? I understand that Kaufmann the German, goes so far as to say that the "bead" of the cow, famous [p. 92] among the women of Cairo, is nothing but the chyme[1] of cattle.

And if his investigation of this subject is barren of scientific results, nevertheless perhaps it enables us to explain this singular belief.

As for the "old wives" of Egypt, they do not order lean women anything else but this.

[1] [The Arabic text has *timūs*, for which I read *kimūs* (chyme). I am unable to verify the opinion of Kaufmann. Tr.]

4: Walker' E-4 (no date) 1934 (ca. 1890) MR13 Fellahin MR13

PART TWO[1]

[The author's rather laboured introductory remarks may be briefly summarized thus. The printing of Part Two was slightly delayed for two years (from 1892–4). In the meanwhile he received enquiries concerning the work from all sides, especially from orientalists and anthropologists. In this way he was encouraged to publish what follows.]

I

THE SHABSHABA AND "MILKING OF THE STARS"

THE strongest "cure" and most successful drug tried among women to restrain their husbands from flirting with other women and keeping them to themselves, is the *Shabshaba*, and the "*milking of the stars*" (*ḥalb al-nugūm*) comes near it. They are almost alike so that in the course of time their two charms have become confused. (Sometimes they are employed for the "cure" of some of the nervous diseases which the common people assert to be due to the Jinn). The *Shabshaba* is very rare in Egypt. Only certain well-known old wives know its real nature. The most famous of these is the Shaikha Khadra al-Aṣwānīya al-Ṣūfīya. She was until 1309 [= 1891] living in a cell at the foot of the [p. 4] Muḳaṭṭam Hills (Cairo) near the tomb of Sīdī 'Umar ibn al-Fārid. [The famous mystical poet (1181–1235). Tr.]. I believe her name is not absent from the memory of those ladies who knew her and verified the success of her "method" and who used to throng to her.

[1] [Printed in the name of the Tenth International Congress of Orientalists held at Geneva, September, 1894.]

this case the supernatural does not enter under this definition." To-day they have brought forward theories seeking to convince their readers of their truth. In reality, they are not the first fruits of their civilisation, nay, the Arabs of Pre-Islamic days said so thousands of years ago. And they say that Ḍaḥḥāk al-Fihrī, one of the petty kings of the Pre-Islamic days killed during one of his raids, three daughters of an old seeress. So she made to appear on his back as a punishment for that, a spreading ulcer with a fierce itch which could not be soothed unless by the application of human brains [p. 9] upon it. It was not long until the ulcer opened its mouth and swallowed its food. And if Ḍaḥḥāk was slow, a voice shouted from the ulcer: Bring my food! or if not, I will slay you! On account of this he destroyed a great number of his subjects. They explain that it was so because the seeress did what she did in the body of Ḍaḥḥāk in order to be avenged on him, first by punishment, and lastly by his death at the hands of his subjects, a great number of whom he destroyed.

There is also the well-known story of 'Abīd ibn al-Abraṣ[1] with the serpent who was burning with thirst and he gave him water to drink. Then it appeared to him after two days in the form of a camel, when his own camel had gone astray, and he recited to it the well-known poem, part of which runs:

"Goodness survives even if the time be long;
But Evil is the worst thing with which to provide yourself."

In short, since these pagan tales were not certified as true, and since the *Shabḥaba* and the experiments of Spiritism were accompanied by the use of narcotic substances (for we have seen that *ḥashīsh* formed a part of the incense of the *Shaikha Khadra*; and the Italian M——— says in his treatise on Spiritism that consorting with women and indulging in debauchery, and using *ḥashīsh* and intoxicants all help to produce at once wonderful spiritual results) then we say that perhaps the matter has been confused in the mind of the experimenters. Thus they think their imaginings are real, and they distinguish

[1] [A well-known Pre-Islamic poet at the Lakhmid Court at al-Ḥīra. Tr.]

in their phantasies " helpers " (*A'wān*) and spirits (*Jinn*), and they picture mighty happenings which were accomplished at the hands of spirits [p. 11] by those incantations and names, during the absence of their reason in the smoke of *bashīsh*; just as the *Shaikha Khadra* and her colleagues used *bashīsh* in incensing only to stupefy the " remnant " of reason in the woman whom the devils of slander and defamation have deceived. Thus there appears to her eyes, what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the reason of any rational being verified.

II

THE KAMARA,[1] OR OPHTHALMIC HOSPITALS IN THE VILLAGES

ALLAH Most High created no land whose people needed to take more care of their eyes than our own land of Egypt, on account of its inhabitants being so subject to dangerous ophthalmia. But He decreed upon the land in past times the lack of many doctors, who are the mainstay of health. Thus the sick, including those suffering from eye-disease, were compelled to appeal to quacks among the ignorant people. With the passage of time the decree of custom became fixed in the minds of the people up to the present time, when medicine has so obviously progressed. Yet we still see great crowds visiting these false physicians to be cured, on the outbreak of diseases. But they only add to their danger and place heavy stumbling blocks [p. 12] in front of the doctor on the day when their " cure " ends in failure, and the patient comes to the cities to be cured of his illness.

In the Gharbiya district there is a woman in a village named *Minyat Ganāh*, who has made her house an ophthalmic hospital. Ignorant women seek her out from every quarter, in connection with their different eye-troubles. She has one method to

[1] [It is named in some provinces the *Shifa*.]

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

THE KARÎN AND KARÎNEH.

[With Plate XIV.]

By Winifred S. Blackman.[1]

Just as I was about to publish the material I have gathered on the question of a "double" in Modern Egypt my attention was drawn to Mr. Hornblower's interesting article on the same subject.[2] During the last three years I have been making very careful enquiries on this point in both Middle and Upper Egypt, my research being carried out very largely among the women. My information differs somewhat from that obtained by Mr. Hornblower, though, as his was obtained in Lower Egypt and mine in Middle and Upper Egypt, the difference in the localities may account for the discrepancies. I should add that the information was given to me quite gratuitously; I tried to avoid asking leading questions, but I would touch on the subject in a natural way when conversing with the women. Also, while listening to their talk, remarks on the "double" would drop out in the course of their conversation. I know how easy it is to make mistakes when trying to get at the truth of such matters, and for this reason I have hesitated to publish anything on this belief until this year, and even now, after trying carefully to verify each point through independent witnesses, I am aware that further study may necessitate a partial revision of what I am stating here.

The modern Egyptian *fellâhîn* believe in a variety of superhuman beings, most of whom live a subterranean existence, though they may often appear above ground. Among these beings are the *'afârît* (sing. *'afrît*) or *ginn*, who have an organized society with a king at their head. These beings are sometimes malevolent, sometimes benevolent, and can be controlled by magicians, both male and female. The "double," which is born with every human being, is quite distinct from the *'afrît*, and it is called, in the case of a man, the *karîn* (colleague; companion), in the case of a woman, *karînah*. The man is always born with his male, as is the woman with her female, counterpart. I have not as yet heard this "double" called the *okht* (sister), though an Egyptian friend of mine, when explaining the word *karînah* to me three years ago, translated it as "fairy sister." The *ginn*, or *'afârît*, are often called

[1] I desire to thank the Trustees of the Percy Sladen Memorial Fund for the grant made towards my expedition in 1923, while Oxford University Research Student in Anthropology, during which time part of the material on this subject was collected.

[2] "Traces of a Ka-Belief in Modern Egypt and Old Arabia." *Ancient Egypt*, Pt. III, 1923,

5:Blackman E-5 (1923)1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

114 The beliefs described above differ somewhat from those recounted by Prof. Seligman in "Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt," in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge, 1913, pp. 448-451, and in Mr. G. D. Hornblower's above-quoted article. Both these authorities have obtained their information from men, the former mainly from an educated Egyptian of Luxor, the latter from an aged native of Helwan and from a wise-man of Nezlet Batrân, a village near the Gizeh pyramids. The last-mentioned informant had come in contact with an Italian spiritualist, from whom he had adopted some of his paraphernalia.

776 114 Prof. Seligman says that, according to the information he obtained, "everyone has an invisible companion of the opposite sex" who is regarded and spoken of as a "sister" or "brother," and that "the death of one or more children in a family [761] is often attributed to the influence of their mother's 'brother' (companion) and the mother and surviving children may wear iron anklets to avert this danger." He goes [751] on to say that, "A variant of this belief asserts that if the child dies while still an infant in arms it is the *qarîna* of the mother that is responsible, but the *qarîna* of the father causes the death of bigger children" (p. 450).

I have made very careful enquiries into the question of the sex of the mother's "double" from among a variety of people, chiefly women, in Fayûm and Asyût Provinces. So far as my researches have gone, I find that my information on this point differs from that of Prof. Seligman's, for I have been invariably told that a woman has a *ḳarînch* (the feminine form) and a man a *ḳarîn* (masc.). It will be noted that Prof. Seligman speaks of a "*qarîna*" in the case of both men and women. I have not heard the "double" spoken of as either a "brother" or a "sister," such epithets being reserved for the *'afârît* (sing. *'afrît*), who, as I stated above, are often called "our brothers and sisters beneath the earth." It is true that, according to my informants, the *afârît* also live beneath the earth, but they have a separate social organization to the *'afârît*.

I also have found that it is the custom for a mother to wear an iron anklet if she [751] has lost all, or most of, her children; or one of her surviving children may wear the iron anklet, which, it is believed, will protect the next child that is born. I have obtained such anklets from a village in Asyût Province and also from one in Fayûm Province. I have always been definitely informed that the father's *ḳarîn* has no influence whatsoever over his children at any age.

Mr. Hornblower also states that, according to his informants, a "sister" is born with every man, though the word *ḳarînch* (fem. of *ḳarîn*) was not used.

I questioned some of my Egyptian friends in Oxford on this point, and they also declared that according to the belief held by the *fellâḥîn*, a man is born with a *ḳarînch* and a woman with a *ḳarîn*, thus upholding Prof. Seligman's and Mr. Hornblower's statements. But these Egyptian gentlemen all come from Lower Egypt, [184] so that I think the differences between my information and that of the two above-named authorities may be owing either to difference of locality (for my information

5:Blackman E-5 (1923) 1926 MR13 Fellahin MR13

was obtained in Middle and Upper Egypt, as, indeed, was Prof. Seligman's), or that it is mere "men's talk," the men possibly preferring to think that their "double" is a female companion, rather than one of their own sex.

In any case, the belief in the existence of this "double," of whichever sex it may be, is widely spread and deeply rooted in the lives of the *fellâḥîn*.[1]

FIG. 1.

The above information is certainly suggestive of survivals of the ancient Egyptian ideas about the *Ka*. The modern idea that the *ḳarîn* is born at the same time as its human counterpart calls to mind the sculptured scenes in the temples of Luxor and Deir el-Baḥri depicting the god Khnum modelling the royal child and its *Ka* (Fig. 1), and their simultaneous birth.

[1] Since writing this article, I have been to Egypt again, and I have found that the belief that the *ḳarîn* is of the opposite sex to its human "double" is more or less confined to the educated classes. Further study on this point goes to prove that my assertion that a man has a *ḳarîn* and a woman a *ḳarînah* is correct, at any rate among many of the *fellâḥîn*. I have lately come across an interesting variety in this belief, but I hope to investigate it more thoroughly before venturing to publish it.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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handled. What is more is that the double handles of this Roman plough reared backwards in as much an angle as that observed in contemporary plough type V. What seems probable here is that plough type IV is directed by the ploughman in the same way as plough II only because the handles are not retreating backwards—hence it would be difficult posture for the ploughman to lean forward behind the ploughand all the time keeping a good distance between himself and the plough, lest his feet should run in the rear of the base. The proper question would be why the handles of this type took a right angle instead of the obtuse angle of type V? One seems to infer this new adjustment of the handles to influences from type II. This, however, does not need the pre-existance of type II in Middle Egypt, because influences can take many channels other than a prior existance.

Region Two : Upper Egypt. This region extends from Aswan in the south to approximately Minya in the North. This region represent the counterpart of the first one, and here we find a deep homogeneity represented by identity and similarity of techniques. Fine dialectal differences are present, e. g., « Wish » and « Wegh » or « Wijh » — face (for the base of the plough), and « Gabaien » or « Gafaien » (for the handles). Identity is attained in naming the essential parts of the handle : « Wish » for the base, « Sikka » for the share, « Gabaien » for the handles, « Gasaba » for the beam, « Koraga » for the beam extension, and « Karab » for the yoke.

Within this region one can find two sub-regions, namely to the North and South of the Nile bend at Qena. The southern sub-region is full of manifestations apparently very old. This may be due to the fact that this area is the southern most of cultivable Egypt, thus representing conservatism at most. We may add to this the existance of influences from Nubia which adjoins the region from the South. We know that the inhabitants of the Island of Baharif, to the north of Aswan, are all Nubians, hence the existance of the special terms which figure on maps (*e*) of fig. 1 and map (*e*) of fig. 2. On map (*e*) fig. 1 we see two localities in Idfu District, west of the Nile, where Hadd is applied to the handles instead of Gafaien. These two localities -

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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Keith and Benhan were given this terminology by Winkler[1]. As we have made investigations in the area between these localities (several villages were studied: Abu Ennase, Abu Ibay, and Rikabi, all of which are put under the cumulative name of Ramadi South in our list) we are led to the conclusion that Winkler must have misunderstood his interpreter in one way or the other. Nevertheless we have specialized a different colouring for both localities on the map pending further research. The most characterising elements in the southern sub-region are the common usage of « Weghe and « Wijhe, for the base, « 'Amude instead of « Mitshe for the pin, and « Mindefe instead of « Weiare or « Barufe for the cross peg of the beam extension. This area is furthermore characterised by the overall usage of plough type V. The Northern sub-region is not so valid in its uniting characters, and is more exposed to influences from the North.

Region Three: Middle Egypt. This region includes Giza, Beni Suef, Fayum and Minya provinces. Region of weakness may safely be applied to this area: a glance at the maps on figs. 1 and 2 would suffice to convey this quality to the reader. It sometimes represent a satellite of the Delta cultural region, and in other times it is attached to Upper Egypt. Such a state of affairs can be readily seen from maps (a), (b), and (c) of fig. 1. But this situation does not include all the region, and one can easily divide it to three sub-regions: Giza Province in general present an increasing influence from the Delta, Minya Province present the other extremity: the Upper Egyptian region knocks always at the door, and lastly the intermediary area of Fayum and Beni Suef which in reality represent in more than one way symptoms of independence symbolised in the peculiarities of its terminology. Here we have « Higre for beam, « Bagroma for pin, « Saffite for the beam extension, « Shaddabe for the cross peg of the beam extension, and « Danade for the yoke.

Although type IV prevails in this region at large, the different appellations suggest to a philologist the deeper study of such word origins.

[1] Winkler, 1936, p. 153.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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171 *407 Herzog again states[1] that the plough is to be found in middle Nubia, and says that an Egyptian governor of Nubia about 1870 tried to persuade the people to use the plough. Though he failed at the begining, the plough, since the introduction of water pumping stations, is now in use in Nubia.

Very important to us is that both the Oasis of Dakhla and Harga use a plough which at least in Harga belong to plough type IV[2], and that Nubia uses also an Egyptian plough. These facts make it clear that the Egyptian Oasis and Nubia are part and parcel of the Egyptian Cultural Region as a whole. The existence of plough type I in Nubia cannot be explained by geographical facts —for as such we would have found plough type V —but can only be explained by the human hazard. If the governor of Nubia happened to be accustomed to Upper Egyptian ploughs the picture would be now different! Trade routes which connect the Oasis with Assyut and Minya Provinces from times immemorial are responsible for the existence of plough type IV in these Oasis. [487]

PROSPECTS

241 One cannot deal with the plough without a few lines about its future. Egypt, through its long history depended upon agriculture for at least seven thousand years. Until 150 years ago the Egyptian agriculture was used to the method of basin irrigation, and there was generally only one crop. The rest of the year the basins were first under the water of the flood —with its renewal of the fertility —then left to dry, thus enabling the penetration of air and heat in the soil —which add to its strength. It is now the theory that the excellent crop of Basin land in southern Upper Egypt is due to both factors, but more to the resting period of soil —which is called in Egypt season of «Sharaiy or Sharaqye. This may also be applied to explain the fabulous richness of Egypt through its long history.

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[1] Herzog, pp. 205-207. On page 205 there is a photograph of a plough in Middle Nubia, which Herzog on page 206 describes as a one handle plough type. This is not the case, and it is apparent from the photograph that plough belong to the Egyptian type I, i.e., the split handled plough. [114]

[2] Winkler, Plate 35, and text page 148.

7: Riad E-4, 5 (no date) 1960
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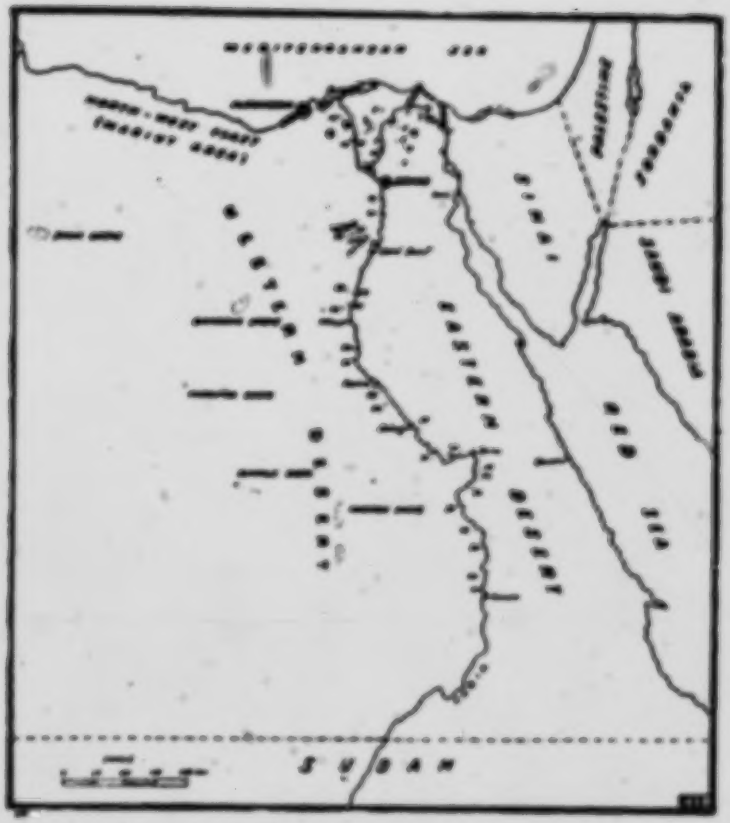

Fig. 4. Names of Localities where Studies on the plough were carried out.

1. Qantara West.	11. Mehlis.	21. Beni Wasif.	31. Kimas.
2. Gesrawia.	12. Kawshouk.	22. Gebrawi.	32. Sherugia.
3. Rosetta.	13. Sanhur.	23. Shrubs.	33. El-Tammai.
4. Nah.	14. Batsa.	24. Mellawi.	34. Nazwir.
5. Ibrahimia.	15. Tamaza.	25. Gurf Sultan.	35. Kelh.
6. Kabet Wahar.	16. Ayat.	26. Nadrit Abdalla.	36. Remadi-South.
7. Bilbeis.	17. Fidimin.	27. Island Wahamra.	37. Ibrahim.
8. Benha.	18. Simra.	28. El-Kab	38. Beheri la.
9. Zefta.	19. Zeid.	29. Island [illegible].	
10. Se'ad Pacha.	20. Mansuria.	30. Abu Hamra	
11. Shoney.	21. Edabiy.	32. Kombowat	

[103]

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
MR13 Fellahin MR13
Upper Egypt

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

The little collection which I herewith publish, doubtless makes known for the first time, a considerable series of songs of the peasants of Upper Egypt; for, as far as I know, there has, hitherto, been printed here and there, only an occasional song, for the most part of no particular content.

Although I hope that my book may also furnish material scientifically available, yet this has not been the motive for its publication. It is not intended as a book for scholars. I trust its perusal may be a pleasure to all travelers on the Nile, and to those who may be preparing themselves for the journey thither, as well as to any others who, upon their return home, would gladly be again reminded of the country and the people. Moreover, it may, perhaps, help all such to learn somewhat better how our brown friends think and feel, than it is possible to do by the mere reading of descriptions. For here the people themselves speak, and in words which were not calculated for their effect upon Europeans. Indeed, I think many will be pleasantly surprised by these songs. Of course they are of unequal merit, but I

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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think that among these unpretentious verses are some, which will give others as much pleasure as they did me.[1]

I wrote down the collection in the winter of 1900—1901, during the excavations of the Berlin Museum at the sun-temple of the old king, Ne-user-Rē, at Abūṣir. (The ruin is called by the people: Abu Gūrâb.) In spite of this, not one of my informants was a Būṣiri (man of Abūṣir), but the entire collection of songs comes from Sa"āris[2] (Saqqāries), inhabitants of Sa"āra (Saqqāra), familiar to all travelers. The nucleus, some forty, I obtained from our black Abu Bekr Ibrāhim es-Sūdâni, a bright, half-grown lad, whose family for several generations, had lived in Egypt. The remainder, with but few exceptions, were contributed by our old rafîr (watchman), Maḥmûd Moḥammed el-'Itr. All the other songs also, were rewritten at his dictation, so that all these printed texts give his pronunciation, which was very beautiful and clear. The old man was indefatigable; every day he came with a new song. "Write! — A new one has flown into my head", were usually his words. When the text was

[1]) A few songs from this collection have already been printed in Arbeit und Rythmus, by K. Buecher (Leipzig, Teubner 1902), and in No. 14 of the Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft.

[2]) The Arabic letter qâf, which in this vicinity is either not pronounced at all, or is spoken like a sharp hiātus, I designate with: '. I found this pronunciation as far as Ehnasye near Beni-Soëf.

8:Schaefer A-5 (1900-1901) 1904
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once fixed, he would patiently repeat it four or five times for correction, and proved himself an excellent commentator, in spite of some misconceptions, which, undoubtedly, may have slipped in. He could neither read nor write, which fact I think was, for my purpose, very fortunate; and I was glad, also, that he knew no other language than his own. It is a pleasure to recall the time, when I spent the greater part of my leisure moments, squatting before the low, reed-covered watchman's-hut, built of the stones from the debris of the excavations, while I looked into the alert face of the one-eyed, old man, and talked with him. I wrote down the songs at once in the transliteration. Only in the case of doubtful words, in order to make certain of the consonants, did I employ a scribe to take down the Arabic at Maḥmûds dictation.[1] I hope, therefore, to be able to offer a comparatively reliable Arabic text. Maḥmûd declared decidedly several times, that none of the songs was composed by himself. The title of my book, therefore, must not be misunderstood; it is intended only to state, that it presents the entire fund of songs which Maḥmûd knew. They are songs which are

[1]) It is a veritable cross, that the uneducated scribes, who never pronounce the qāf, either do not write it at all, or indicate it by the alif. Because of this, many words are disfigured beyond recognition. It was a great help to me, to have among our workmen, several from Qufṭ in Upper Egypt, who pronounce the qāf like hard *g*. In doubtful cases I had them repeat the words in question, and could thus determine the lacking qāfs.

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114 really sung by the people. I was able to prove this in many cases by casually questioning others. It is certain that the majority of these songs did not originate in our day. Some of them can be proven to have been sung just as they are, fifty or sixty years ago.

533 The life of the Egyptian peasant (singular: fellāḥ, plural: fellāḥīn), made up of hard work and few pleasures, is more monotonous than that of most peoples. Any great wealth in the material is, therefore, hardly to be expected; and besides this, my collection is small. Nevertheless, it touches all the essential aspects of peasant life. We find children at play and with their mother; lads at the work of excavation; girls drawing water; men at the plow, shāduf and sā'ye (sāqye); the sailor and the vegetable-vender; the watchman guarding the antiquities; and much more.

The most diverse tones are struck; a soft, often fervent piety in the half-religious songs, and in the midst of them the roguish song about sacred Mecca; sharp scorn in the scolding songs and excellent humor in the self-rallying of the poor peasant-lad. Pleasures of the feast; the pilgrimage to Mecca; prison and death are made subjects of song. Even in the sphere of love-songs, which, in modern Egypto-Arabic poetry are usually rather monotonous, there is great variety of treatment shown. To be sure, there are not lacking, the sentimental and often tearful descriptions of love-sickness, which, in the Egyptian mind, are inseparable from the lover; nevertheless

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it is just in the love-songs that we find a certain freshness and vividness. If the character as a whole were not to be misrepresented, then we could not omit from the collection, those songs which, for our feeling, are rather too strongly natural in expression.[1] Prudishness seemed to me, in this case, to deserve little consideration. I have, however, been obliged to withhold about a dozen of them.

The songs all have their melodies, although they are not always pleasing to our ear, because of their limitation to a few tones, and of being sung in a peculiar, nasal voice; nevertheless, the Egyptians pride themselves on their singing, and consider themselves a very musical people.[2] Even if I had heard all the songs sung, it would have been of very little use to me, for, being quite unmusical, I would not have been able either to write them down or to confide them to memory. I must leave it to others to remedy this; it would certainly be worth while. When the boys sang at the work of excavating, as they were usually inclined to do, they

[1]) According to Mahmûds testimony, the most outspoken of these are sung by old women, who are paid to entertain the guests at family celebrations. In a village there are three or four such women.

[2]) That this claim is recognised outside of their own land, as justifiable, Wetzstein shows, in his remark, that in Damascus, Egyptians are chosen by preference, for street-criers (especially as musebbil) on account of their artistic singing. (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft, XI p. 513.)

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461 kept strict time, accenting the beats, which, just as
533 in ancient times, were, besides, often marked by clapping the hands and stamping the feet. The songs of the boys, who, 4500 years ago were occupied in building our temple of the sun, will not have sounded very differently.

114 Although I collected the songs at Sa"āra (Saq-
171 qāra), it is, of course, not to be inferred, that they
121 all originated there, or that they are not sung elsewhere. In some cases it could be determined, that knowledge of them extended to Cairo and even to the sea between Egypt and Palestine. It is worthy of note, that several songs which others endeavored to contribute, were refused by Maḥmûd with the words: "No, those are not peasant songs." It will be very interesting to determine the geographical range of the songs, when once collections of songs from other places have been published, with exact indications of their provenience.[1] As they are songs in the Arabic language, there will be evident similarities with Arabic songs from countries outside of Egypt, in spite of their being quite distinct in general character from the non-Egyptian songs with which
• 114 I am acquainted. The only time which I had at my disposal for writing down the songs, were the few free hours which the work of excavation, with

[1]) F. Kern informs me, that some of the songs, with variations, are contained in the collection: Qaṭâif el-laṭâif, printed in Cairo. In the detailed treatment which he is preparing, he will follow the occurrence of our songs in vulgar Arabic texts both printed and manuscript.

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its manifold cares, allowed me.[1] Moreover, I am entirely without previous training as an Arabist, since all that I know of the language, was learned during my two years' sojourn in Egypt, when the study of Arabic was merely an incidental matter. I am, therefore, greatly indebted to Professor Dr. A. Fischer, of Leipzig, for going to the trouble of looking through my "layman's-translations" and freeing them from a number of mistakes, both great and small. That the work, nevertheless, contains various mistakes, is due to the circumstances already mentioned, and we are both fully aware of them. What may be said of the songs from the standpoint of the Arabist, will be elsewhere stated by Professor Fischer[2], when he will also indicate where he does not agree with the translations and explanations which I have adopted. 114

I could almost wish that a good deal of fault may be found with my work, if it might prove true the German proverb: "Dass man der Dornen acht', das haben die Rosen gemacht." In Lane's classical book[3] we have a most excellent description of the life and customs of the inhabitants of Cairo. The treatment of the conditions in Upper Egypt is lim-

[1]) In No. 14 of the Mitteilungen der Deutschen Orient-Gesellschaft, L. Borchardt gives a vivid description of a working-day.

[2]) For lesser contributions I am indebted to L. Borchardt as well as Professor Dr. Lippert.

[3]) An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians. (London 1836; 1882; herein cited from the old edition.) [113]

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● 114 ited to a few pages, and yet it is just these which are vastly more important to us Egyptologists, for the history of culture. But the work of a layman's leisure hours can not produce a supplement to Lane.

Some young, efficient Arabist, with open eyes and a fondness for the land and inhabitants, and possessed of sufficient knowledge of Ancient Egypt and the Coptic language, ought to bury himself for two or three years, in an Upper Egyptian village. I am convinced that this sacrifice would be richly repaid in regard to the Arabic language also. It can not be accomplished by mere visits during the season.[1]

Up to this time next to nothing has been done in this direction[2], and who knows when it may be too late?

It would please me most of all, if my book should prove an incentive for the production of a better one, which would form a companion-piece to G. Dalman's excellent "Palaestinischer Diwan" (Leipzig, Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1901).

Heinrich Schaefer.

Steglitz, June 13, 1902.

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[181] [1]) The Egyptians are much more unapproachable and reserved in many things than is apparent from slight contact.

[113] [2]) Klunzinger's splendid book: "Bilder aus Ober-Aegypten etc." (Stuttgart, 1877.) gives a great deal, but not all, by far, of the wealth of material.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

In the preparation of the English edition of these songs, the translator has received from Professor Schaefer, a number of verbal remarks furnished by Dr. F. Kern; others from reviews by A. Nallino (Litterarisches Centralblatt); B. Meissner (Deutsche Litteraturzeitung 1904 p. 1493) and especially by K. Vollers (Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenlaendischen Gesellschaft LVIII, p. 226), thus making possible many improvements upon the German edition. The author has also himself furnished numerous additional remarks and notes. The entire work of producing the English edition has been done under the most advantageous circumstances; constant consultation with the author, and frequent discussions of doubtful points have ensured much greater accuracy than would otherwise have been possible.

The English version of the songs is not merely a translation from the German; wherever necessary, the Arabic was consulted, and for this aid, besides the author, I am indebted to my husband, who also gave the translation a careful revision.

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The reader should note that all the vowels in the transliteration have the sounds of Italian or continental vowels.

The word, fellâḥ, which has been translated: "peasant", means literally: plowman.

For the sake of preserving the play on words, so characteristic of the Arabic, it has sometimes been necessary to translate literally, where, in order to be perfectly intelligible, a foot-note was essential. (Numbers 34—35, "finished".)

Owing to the differences in our occidental, living arrangements, it has been difficult, in some instances, to preserve the comparisons which are more easily rendered in the German.

The task herewith completed, has given me unusual pleasure, since it has acquainted me with many things in the life of the people, which, during a winter in Egypt, entirely escaped me. I can only hope that the translation may render the same service to travelers in Egypt, as well as to all lovers of folk-lore.

Frances Hart Breasted.

Gross Lichterfelde, July 18, 1904.

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21.

Inattentive Devotions.

×539 In 1873, in Cairo, Goldziher heard a song, in which our numbers 21 and 62 were united by a third piece. (Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. morg. Ges. 33, p. 627.) According to a communication of F. Kern, song 21 is also sung in Burdên, near Zaqāziq (Za'ūzi').

Daḫaltê bēt Alla,
la'ît ḥamām aḫḍar;
bila"amâ sukkar.
Ya rētni du'to!
Lagl-en-nabi zurto!

I have entered Allah's house,
And found gray doves;
They are fed with sugar.
O, if only I could have a taste of it!
— — But I have visited it for the sake of the Prophet!

1. The mosque, which the boy has entered for prayer.

2. In the colonnaded, open court (ṣaḥn) of the mosque, in which stands the well for the ablutions. Here doves often alight. Aḫḍar designates the color gray as well as green, although the latter is more commonly the case. (Lane I p. 321.)

3. He reproves himself for his childish, worldly thought. "It", that is, the house of Allah.

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40.

×539 304 852 The father hurries home to the festivity.

'Addīni, ya-m'addāwi!
an-arauwaḥ baladi
warauwaḥ bis-salāme
waṭāhir waladi.

Ferry me over, ferryman!
I wish to go to my village
And go safely,
And have my son circumcised.

[113] J. H. Churi, in Sea Nile the Desert etc. London 1853, p. 309 (reprinted by Buecher, Arbeit und Rhythmus, p. 429) gives this song with a melody. The first two verses are also to be found in a song of Egyptian origin, which was dictated to Dalman (p. 141) by a sailor in Sidon.

41.

[301] [292] The women are decking out the boy for the procession, with a necklace and a ṭarbûsh (compare No. 24). The mother speaks:

El-'o'd 'o'di, wan-aldumo be-hawāye!
Gibt eṭ-ṭarābiš, labbasû-li ḥadāye,
we-'adāit ummo rāide ḥaṭṭāye!

The necklace is my necklace, and I shall string it as I please!
I have brought the ṭarbûsh, dress him (the boy) here before me,
(So smartly) that the enemy of his mother will be sick (from envy)!

● [114] 3. This is Maḥmûd's interpretation, but it may be that he is wrong in this interpretation, which demands rāqide instead of rāide.

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Calls of the Radish-Vender.

539x
262

48.

Radishes are eaten with great relish everywhere in Egypt, but especially in the country. They are of a particular variety with meaty leaves.

In a manuscript about a hundred years old, belonging to the Reichsmuseum at Budapest, containing poems in vulgar Arabic composed by Copts, there are to be found some also which contain the observation: "After the manner of: Raiyān ya figl aḫḍar". (F. Kern.) [114 538]

Raiyān ya figl aḫḍar,
ya ḥilu zē sukkar!
wel-figlē di figli
wana elli ḥarito 'al-'egli!
nuṣṣ el-balad tišhad-li,
ḥatte-l-banāt el-bukkar.

Fresh, green radishes,
Sweet as sugar!
And these radishes are my radishes
And I have ploughed them with my heifer!
Half the village can bear me witness,
Even to the unmarried girls.

4 "Them", namely: the fields in which they grow.

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55.

Arrogance.

×539 578 I am a much-traveled, important man. Compared with me, what a pitiful fellow you are!

Ruzz is, properly speaking, the name of the Mamalukes, whom Mohammed Ali exterminated. For Mahmûd it merely designated the "soldiers who came from Stambul". Sport is here made of the soldiers. In No. 56 we find the opposite case.

● [114] According to F. Kern, it is a sailor-song. Lines 1 and 3 are sung by the leader; line 2, and a fourth lacking here, are sung by the others.

Mikke biladi, wel-ḥabaš manzali
we-ummak tebī' er-ruzz, ya Nōfali.
Er-ruzz akl el-ṛuzz, ya Nōfali.

Mecca is my home-land and I live in Abyssinia.
[And thou?] Thy mother sells rice, Nōfali.
Rice is soldiers' food, Nōfali!

[551] 2. Nōfali is a man's name.

[262] 3. That rice once formed or now forms the principal element of the soldier's food is new to me. The word ruzz (rice) is probably used only because of its resemblance to ṛuzz (Mamaluke).

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72.

The Wakening of Love.

×539
832

Yamma, ya rigli, la"ha-lli māši.
ʿēn el-ʿarūse lil-ʿarīs bitrāši.
Ya lēl ṭūl, ya fegr ma-ṭ'allāši,
lamma yenām el-ḥill waiye ḥalīlo,
u-fa"aš er-rummān ʿala-l-furāši.

O mother, my foot! He who passes, has touched it!
The eye of the virgin weeps for her bridegroom.
O, night linger on, O, dawn come not nigh,
When my beloved sleeps with his companion,
And breaks open the pomegranates upon the pillow.

1. The passer-by wishes to enter into relations with her.
3. Compare No. 110, note on l. 6.

73.

The Day That I Saw Thee . . .

[114] The beginning of a song which Vollers took down from the lips of a blind sailor, at Assuân in 1890. (Zeitschr. d. Deutsch. morg. Ges. LVIII, 228.)

Yōm šuftak ḥabbētak ḥaliṣ,
u-saʿet-lak bil-widd el-ḥaliṣ.

The day that I saw thee, I loved thee dearly.
And I have sought thee with sincere love.

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81.

Wind and Love.

539x 832

The point of this song lies in the double meaning of the word hawa: "wind" and "love".

According to Maḥmûd the situation is as follows: The [192] man is a watchman (ṣafîr) of the Administration of Antiquities in the desert, like Maḥmûd himself.

In a hut made of reeds, he takes shelter against the [342] hawa, the wind. (ll. 1—2). The hut is, however, no protection (l. 3) against the other hawa, love. He has asked a girl to visit him in his tent, but receives the pretty "Schnaderhuepfel"-reply contained in ll. 4—7.

[We have no English equivalent for Schnaderhuepfel, it [114] being a kind of extemporaneous, doggerel rhyme, peculiar to the peasants of the Alpine regions. Transl.]

'Ali 'Elēwe bana-lo fil-gibāl iḫṣās,
biddo yeḥūš el-hawa.
Hāwa el-hawa yinḥāš?
Wir-raml lam yin'iriš,
weš-šōk lam yindās,
wil-bint lam tinḥiṭib,
illa-blammet nās.

'Ali 'Elēwe has built himself huts in the desert;
He wishes to keep off the wind (hawa)
And will he be able to keep off love (hawa)?
But one does not chew sand,
Nor on thorns does one tread,
And the girl will not be wooed
Save in a gathering of people.

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89.

The Wind, the Rogue.

×539
821
[114]

Tantavy, in Traité de la langue arabe vulgaire, p. 222 (hence of the year 1848) has this same little song in a slightly varying form. According to that version we have inserted ʿāni in our last line, in order to rhyme with gāni, instead of ḫāli as Maḥmūd gave it.

Habaṭ el-hawa fil-bāb,
ʾult el-helēwe gāni.
Atarīk, ya hawa, kaddāb,
beyidḥak ʿala-l-ʾalb el-ʿāni.

The wind knocked at the door,
And I said: "My little sweetheart has come to me."
Therefore art thou a rogue, O wind,
Who laughs at a grieving heart.

539 5 They will carry thee to the villages of the Ṛarbīye,
593 And some fine day thou wilt be without thy children.
464 So stay by thy rowing,
Whilst thou stirrest up the flowing sand."

2. 'ange is a large sail-boat, almost exactly resembling the better known dahabīye, excepting that it is smaller. Compare Wilkinson, Modern Egypt I p. 209 ff. (cut ibid. p. 195).

3. Compare note on No. 96, l. 5.

4. 5. eš-šar'īye, namely the east and el-ṛarbīye: the west, are two provinces of the Delta, of which the capitals are Zaqāzîq (Za'āzī') and Ṭanṭa.

8. In pushing off, the oars stir up the sand. This is Maḥmûd's explanation, but I have a suspicion that this line has been corrupted. Perhaps a picture has slipped in from the excavations, where the fine, running sand often makes the work a task of the Danaïds.

132.

An Evidence of Favor.

53 A certain working-girl boasts to her companions. The
832 inspector has not given the pretty girl a pomegranate without
[824] a purpose. The pomegranate is a sign for love.

El-ḫōli iddāni rummāne
we-ṛamażni be-'ēno en-na'sāne.

The inspector has given me a pomegranate
And has winked at me with his sleepy eye.

[624] 1. Ḫōli is the inspector of an estate of some size.

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134.

A Motto.

X539
114
517

When Maḥmûds stock of songs was exhausted, he came once again and dictated to me this song, in praise of the comfortable, dreamy mood, the "kēf", which the Egyptian loves so dearly. He insisted that I should place it as a sort of motto at the beginning of my book; he probably meant before the love-sonnets. (Maḥmûd called a love-song: ṛunet hawa).

Maḥlak, ya kēf,
'and arbab el-ṛarām, maḥlak!
Mašnak, ya kēf,
'and illi ma yidriku ma'nāk.

How sweet art thou, O contemplative quiet (kēf),
In the opinion of lovers, how sweet!
How hateful art thou, O contemplative quiet (kēf),
In the opinion of those, who understand not thy meaning!

4. . . . and therefore do not know what to do with thee.